



December 22, 2003

Providence man is charged with drug trafficking and firearms offenses

A federal grand jury has charged **James Dixon**, of Providence, with trafficking in crack cocaine and with two firearms offenses – being a felon in possession of a firearm and possessing a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking. Providence Police arrested Dixon on December 2 after executing a state-authorized search warrant at his apartment at 67/69 Comstock Avenue.

The Office of the United States Attorney, Colonel Dean Esserman, Chief of the Providence Police Department, and Monty J. Monteiro, Resident Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), jointly announced a three-count indictment, which was returned on December 17. Dixon was arraigned today before Magistrate Judge Robert W. Lovegreen, pleaded not guilty, and was ordered detained.

The indictment supplants a federal complaint that was filed on December 5. According to an affidavit supporting that complaint, beginning in October, detectives Andrew Lawton and Nicholas Ludovici of the Narcotics, Firearms and Organized Crime Unit investigated Dixon for suspected trafficking. On several occasions, according to the affidavit, they observed Dixon make suspected drug deals in front of his home.

On December 2, detectives executed a search warrant for the second floor apartment of 67-69 Comstock Avenue. In various locations they found quantities of crack cocaine, a loaded .38 caliber revolver, \$1,283 in cash, and materials used in drug trafficking. They arrested Dixon, who was home at the time. ATF joined the investigation the next day.

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The indictment charges Dixon with possessing with intent to distribute crack cocaine, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. The firearm allegedly had an obliterated serial number. An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Upon conviction, the statutory maximum penalties for the offenses charged in the indictment are: possessing with intent to distribute crack cocaine – 40 years in federal prison and a \$2,000,000 fine, with a minimum sentence of five years imprisonment; being a felon in possession of a firearm – ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine; using a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense – up to life imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine, with a mandatory minimum sentence of five years imprisonment, consecutive. Exact sentencing for any defendant convicted would be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

Providence Police and **ATF** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gerard B. Sullivan is prosecuting it for the government as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes.

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Contact: 401-528-5224

E-mail: thomas.connell@usdoj.gov